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ABSTRACT

Although this book concedes that people lack political information and that this ignorance can allow people "of sinister designs" to deceive and betray the uninformed, it does not concede that democracy must succumb to these threats. Rather, the book argues that limited information need not prevent people from making reasoned choices, and that there are specific conditions under which people with limited information can make these reasoned choices. Theories of attention, persuasion, and delegation built upon the ideas of others are constructed in the book. The book is divided into three parts: "Theory"; "Experiments"; and "Implications for Institutional Design." The first part, containing chapters 2 through 5, develops theories, while the second part, which contains chapters 6 through 9, tests the crucial hypotheses about learning, persuasion, reasoned choice, and delegation that is produced in the first part. The third part, which contains chapter 10 and an Afterword, describes the theories' and experiments' implications for the effect and design of political institutions. Chapter 10 examines democratic institutions from the United States and elsewhere and shows how they do or do not provide the context for successful delegation. The Afterword discusses how to reform institutions to stack the deck in favor of reasoned choice and successful delegation. Appendices to chapters 2, 3, and 5 are attached; extensive references, and both a subject and an author index are included. (BT)

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